

The great problem of the unhealed mastoid cavity is likely to become less, partly because we can now actually obliterate the cavity by swinging a pedicled flap of temporalis muscle into it, and partly because, in fact, we are making fewer cavities than before. We have realised at last that, in the early stages, the disease can often be dealt with from the middle ear without opening the mastoid air-cell system at all.

In conclusion, it must be emphasised that not every patient with chronic suppurative otitis media is a candidate for tympanoplasty. Rather it should be reserved for two particular groups:—

- (1) Those with bilateral disease, where hearing improvement is highly desirable.
- (2) Those with “benign” perforations for whom a career in the armed forces or swimming, and aquatic sports generally, are very important.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. MacLaughlin, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Craig, and Mr. McCrea for giving me the time and opportunity to become interested in this fascinating problem.

REVIEW

THE ORIGIN OF MEDICAL TERMS. By Henry Alan Skinner, M.B., F.R.C.S. Second Edition. (Pp. 420; figs. 350. 100s.) London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox, 1961.

THE purpose of this book is to facilitate the medical student and others in finding the meaning of standard medical terms, particularly those used in the basic sciences of Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology. Such a reference book has become more necessary since the medical student has discarded the study of Latin and Greek, and the meaning of many of the words and phrases which he meets in his everyday reading has become more than ever before ‘Greek’ to him.

There are brief historical sketches of many of our predecessors who have given their names to structures and syndromes. The earliest representation of the serpent and staff is surely not that of Aesklepios since similar emblems are to be found in some of the temples of healing in Sumaria. It is interesting that these latter show two snakes and not the single snake of the Greek god.

It is a book useful to students, and promises many an interesting hour for those who have time to browse in it.

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